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Najib: Groups trying to narrow teachings

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today warned Muslims to be wary of groups trying to narrow Islamic teachings.

The Deputy Prime Minister said Islam would not prosper if Muslims did not have the willpower and strength to resist such groups.

Muslims nationwide should not narrow their understanding of the religion by merely being proud with Islamic slogans, speeches and banners, he said.

"Islam is not about slogans, religious speeches and banners alone. What is the point of being proud by having skull caps, sporting a beard and wearing green attire if Muslims and the country are backward? Islam should not be politicised," he said at the opening of the seminar on Malaysia's Achievement as an Islamic Nation at the Institute Kefahaman Islam Malaysia here.

Najib also launched a dual-language book published by IKIM entitled "Malaysia Sebagai Sebuah Negara Islam" (Malaysia As An Islamic Nation).

Lecturers, authors, academicians, professors and past leaders, including Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, had contributed to the 850-page book which has yet to be priced.

Najib said the Government had implemented an intelligent approach to propagate and develop Islam in all fields. He advised Muslims not to deliberately invite trouble which could ruin the nation and destroy what had been achieved.

However, Najib said Malaysian Muslims were a strong lot who could make Malaysia a model Islamic nation.

The Government, too, was able to place Malaysia at the forefront of Muslim nations while the people joined efforts to further enhance Malaysia as a strong, developed and outstanding Islamic country, he said.

Najib said in education, the Government produced individuals not only well-versed in religion but also capable of becoming technocrats who could contribute to the nation's growth.

"The Government's prompt initiative in drawing up policies like the stimulus package to deal with negative impacts created by the SARS outbreak and Middle East conflict contributed to the robust domestic economic activities," he said.

Najib said Malaysia's global competitive edge jumped from 10th spot in 2001 to fourth last year, making it a model nation in Islamic banking and financial system.

The Islamic banking system, introduced gradually, has been widely accepted because it was practical and not controversial.

"Furthermore, with an efficient management, the public and private sectors have boosted the nation's competitive and development performance."

Najib said the move by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to fight corruption and gain confidence through a clean government was in line with Islam's call for a responsible and fair leadership that serves the people's well-being.

"Malaysia's accomplishments in politics, particularly the Government's success in ensuring unity and harmony in a multi-racial society, are unrivalled by other nations."